

## REMARKS

Amended claim 1 now recites that the driving mechanism for driving the spool “can be used repeatedly”. Support for this claim is present in the specification, which discloses the use of an electric motor 60 as a driving mechanism in Figure 1. The use of such an electric motor which claim 1 specifies is “disposed between the pair of leg plates” of the frame allows the over-all structure of the webbing retractor to be compact and well balanced. Additionally, the location of the driving mechanism relatively close to the spool allows the motor to deliver torque to the spool quickly and smoothly. By contrast, the Nilsson ‘832 patent discloses the use of a relatively large pyrotechnically powered automatic windup mechanism 1 located outside of the leg plates of the frame, resulting in a larger and relatively poorly balanced structure. It is well known that such pyrotechnically powered windup mechanism may be used only once (see the paragraph bridging columns 3 and 4) and then must be replaced. Since amended claim 1 now specifies a drive mechanism that is “disposed between the pair of leg plates” and that “can be used repeatedly”, claim 1 is clearly patentable over the Nilsson ‘832 patent.

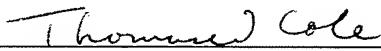
Claims 2-19 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

New claim 20 recites that “the output shaft of the driving mechanism is disposed parallel to the rotation axis of the spool.” By contrast, the shaft of the windup mechanism of the Nilsson ‘832 device is orthogonal to the axis of rotation of the reel 27 (see pulley 23). For this reason alone, claim 20 is patentable over the Nilsson ‘832 device. Additionally, as was pointed out with respect to claim 1, claim 20 recites that the driving mechanism is “disposed between the pair of leg plates” of the frame, which allows the over-all structure of the webbing retractor to be compact and well balanced. By contrast, the Nilsson ‘832 patent discloses the use of a relatively large pyrotechnically powered automatic windup mechanism 1 located outside of the leg plates of the frame, resulting in a larger and relatively poorly balanced structure. For all these reasons, claim 20 is clearly patentable over the Nilsson ‘832 patent.

Finally, with respect to the Kanada ‘569 patent, this reference neither discloses nor suggests the “clutch disposed between the pair of leg plates” recited in both claims 1 and 20.

It should further be noted that the claimed driving mechanism disposed between the leg plates of the frame advantageously obviates the need for a spring between the clutch and the driving mechanism.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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